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INFO RUEHEE/ARAB LEAGUE COLLECTIVE  
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 3358  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO 3565  
RHMFISS/CDR USCENCOM MACDILL AFB FL  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIRUT 000078

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ELA  
NEA FOR JONATHAN PECCIA  
ALSO FOR IO A/S HOOK, PDAS WARLICK  
P FOR DRUSSELL AND RRANGASWAMY  
USUN FOR KHALILZAD/WOLFF/GERMAIN/SCHEDLBAUER  
NSC FOR ABRAMS/RAMCHAND/YERGER/MCDERMOTT

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/25/2018

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: LEBANON: SINIORA ASSURES GOL OPPOSED TO ROCKET  
ATTACKS

REF: A. STATE 3953

[1](#)B. STATE 4387

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires William Grant for reasons 1.4 (b) and  
(d).

SUMMARY

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[1](#)1. (C) In a January 16 meeting, Prime Minister Fouad Siniora assured Charge that the GOL was united in its condemnation of rocket attacks on Israel from Lebanon. He said he had ordered the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) to coordinate with UNIFIL on patrolling the border area and preventing further attacks. Israel had confirmed at the tripartite military coordination meeting between UNIFIL, Israel, and Lebanon, held that morning that none of the rockets from the January 14 incident had reached Israeli soil, he said. Israel's actions with Gaza did nothing but discredit moderate Arabs and gave Iran a huge victory. Charge also relayed Ref B points on a U.S.-Israel MOU on countering smuggling. Siniora was interested in details but skeptical it would have a significant impact. End summary.

GOVERNMENT UNITED IN CONDEMNATION OF ATTACKS

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[1](#)2. (C) On January 16, Charge, accompanied by PolEconOff, called on Prime Minister Fouad Siniora at the Grand Serail. Siniora advisor Rola Nouredine also attended the meeting. Charge highlighted the strong USG concern about a possible escalation of hostilities between Lebanon and Israel as a result of recent rocket attacks on Israel from Lebanese territory in retaliation for Israeli action in Gaza (ref A). Siniora pointed out that he had spoken out strongly on behalf of the government against the rocket attacks in his statement following the January 15 cabinet meeting, and he assured the Charge that the entire Lebanese government, including Hizballah, was firm in this condemnation. Siniora added that he had given instructions to the LAF to do joint patrols with UNIFIL to find the perpetrators of the attacks, if possible, and to prevent any further rocket activity.

ISRAEL'S MESSAGES TO LEBANESE: WE WILL RESPOND SWIFTLY TO  
FUTURE ATTACKS

13. (C) We saw Siniora just after the regular tripartite UNIFIL-Israel-Lebanon military coordination meetings had ended. He claimed that during the meeting, Israel had confirmed that none of the rockets fired January 14, in attacks UNIFIL had described as "unprofessional," had landed on Israeli territory. Nouredine said the Israelis had responded to the attacks based on radar information, not on actual explosions in Israel. She added that the Israelis had also said tht they viewed the attacks as a message, passed wih the knowledge of Hizballah in an attempt to divet Israeli forces from Gaza to the northern border.

14. (C) Nouredine said the Israelis had indicated they would continue to respond immediately to any future attacks, without coordinating with UNIFIL, and regardless of the presence of civilians. On a different issue, she also noted the Israelis had agreed to demarcate another fourteen points of the Blue Line. Siniora was pleased the Israelis had responded positively to this push from the Lebanese side to demarcate the line. He lamented that they had not responded to other complaints expressed at the tripartite meeting.

#### ISRAELI ACTION A VICTORY FOR IRAN

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15. (C) The Charge noted the USG concern about the continuation of the attacks, which undermined support for Lebanon in the U.S. Congress. Siniora asked Charge to view the situation "on the macro, rather than the micro level." He said Israeli actions in Gaza discredited the position of moderate Arabs across the region, and granted Iran a "great

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breakthrough." He believed that despite the damage Israel has inflicted on Hamas, "Hamas is not going away." He pointed to unsuccessful past attempts by Israel to destroy extremist groups, and meanwhile, he said, moderate forces in the region suffer politically in the face of a humanitarian disaster. The only ones who win are the Iranians, he stressed.

16. (C) Nouredine expanded on this idea, saying Iran has played a "double game," not directly instigating violence, but attempting to play a diplomatic role. While moderate Arab regimes were blamed for not doing enough to help the Gazans, Iran was successful at pitting Arabs against Arabs, while looking merely like a sympathetic observer.

#### U.S.-ISRAEL MOU

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17. (C) Charge outlined points in Ref B about the memorandum of understanding to be signed by Secretary Rice and Israeli FM Livni on countering weapons smuggling into the Gaza strip. Siniora asked how it would work; Charge responded with points in Ref. Siniora expressed skepticism the MOU would have significant impact.  
GRANT